



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

STIEGEL GLASS



THE collection of glass made by Henry William Stiegel of Pennsylvania in the last part of the eighteenth century, which was presented to the Museum by Frederick William Hunter in 1913, forms one of the most interesting and valuable sources for the study of the American arts of decoration, comparable in its importance to the Bolles collection of seventeenth-century furniture, given by

Mrs. Russell Sage in 1909. The collection both contains objects of beauty in themselves, and by its completeness in examples of the different kinds of vessels made by this pioneer in glass-making, furnishes a valuable opportunity for the study of a chapter in our craftsmanship previously lacking.

Mr. Hunter has not been content, however, to bring together the examples of Stiegel's art, leaving to some one else the exposition of it, but has followed up his labors of collector by those of biographer and historian, and in the volume just issued over the imprint of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin Co., entitled "Stiegel Glass," he has laid the American student and collector under an additional debt of gratitude to him. Of imposing format, of paper and type such as publishers rarely give us, and with a wealth of illustrations, colored as well as black-and-white, the book is one of which author and printer may well be proud; but better even than all of this are Mr. Hunter's competent, painstaking, and thorough handling of his facts, and his sometimes whimsical, sometimes ironic, always delightful attitude toward his man and the many traditions enveloping the pursuit, literary and material, of Stiegel Glass. It is rarely, indeed, that a book of this kind has been made so readable.

As Mr. Hunter may be said to have recreated Stiegel glass through his efforts in bringing together examples of it, so he may be said to have recreated Stiegel himself in this book, and this we say, in spite of the author's modesty, which admits a degree of failure to banish entirely a certain haziness which had hung over the man and his works.

To Stiegel's *Start in Life*, his first chapter, Mr. Hunter prefaces certain shrewd remarks that bear quoting in full because they set forth the thesis of the book, and because they show the author's cheery philosophy and characteristic touch:

"Viewed from the early years of the twentieth century, Stiegel is instantly seen as making a living claim upon our interest and attention by reason of two contributions which he has made to the current consciousness of our time. One of these is the surviving glass of his manufacture, which, as we are just beginning to realize, deserves and is soon to have an honored place among the historic vestiges of our early national life. The other contribution is less tangible, but more potent. It is a legend—the glowing mirage of a picturesque personality.

"But the cult for 'Americana' is even yet in swaddling bands and was not only unborn, but undreamed of, in Stiegel's day.

"And legends root in graves.

"At the time of his death and in the eyes of those contemporaries who survived him, Stiegel was merely a discredited iron-master who had had too many irons in the fire.

"What he had actually accomplished toward the development of Pennsylvania had long been lost sight of in the fact that he had accomplished nothing for himself.

"His glass was as little thought of as any other local product claiming as its proudest boast to be 'as good as imported.'

"His legend wasn't sprouted.

"For nearly sixty years his very memory survived only as a pensioner in old wives' tales; and it was 1844 before a historian of Lancaster County embalmed the oral tradition of him in print like a fly in amber.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

PRICE TEN CENTS

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

VOLUME IX

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER, 1914

NUMBER 11



COVERED BOWL, STIEGEL GLASS
LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

"Time went on and other local historians retold the curious tale—adding, here a bit of flotsam folklore, there a bit of chance-found documentary evidence of fact. The seed, as seeds must, was germinating in the dark. And the glass, as glass will, was patiently biding its time in corner cupboards and farmhouse attics.

"And then, in our own time, the legend suddenly came to blossom and the glass began to take on its antiquarian interest. And what more natural than that the sanguine, at this sight, should mistake Stiegel for a hero of romance by the simple error of crediting the unearned increment of the years to the account of the man himself; or that the conservative should try to restore the balance of the scales by voicing a dissent that sounded very like dispragement?"

"But the time has come to go a little deeper. And it is the object of the following sketch, in so far as that is now possible, to brush aside the haze of the years and discover what manner of personality it actually was that is thus glowingly reflected on the clouds of tradition."

We must note here that the date of Stiegel's birth at Cologne is given as May 13, 1729, a year earlier than the generally accepted date, and the tradition of his noble blood is thrashed out and disposed of.

Some idea of the scope and character of the book may be gained from the list of its chapters, which are divided into two parts, the first devoted to the man and the traditions, and the second to glass in general and Stiegel Glass in particular.

Stiegel's Start in America, at Philadelphia in 1750; The Carving Out of a Career; Stiegel's Beginnings as a Glass-

Maker; The Beginnings of Manheim; The Career Culminates; The Stiegel Lottery; The Failure; The Stiegel Imprisonment, Final Years (he died in 1785); and The Feast of Roses tell the story of a rarely interesting life with all of the traditions with which it was surrounded.

"We have no portrait of Henry William Stiegel, and no description of his appearance or of his person has come down to us. But it is evident from what we know of his career that he had, as the saying is, a way with him. He had been dowered by nature with really fine abilities. He was a passionate lover of music. He was a discriminating connoisseur of beauty. He had an aptitude for science. He had a keen eye for business possibilities; was possessed of both energy and initiative; was a persuasive promoter and had a talent for organization. But some disgruntled fairy had endowed him at birth with the ironic gift of a too great facility. So that, while he was brilliantly destined to do many things well without effort, he was doomed never, until too late, to learn his own limitations. And since, in the beginning, he knew no need to focus his ambitions and concentrate his endeavors, so to the end he found it more congenial to dazzle his inferiors than to retain the confidence of his equals."

In the second part of the volume Mr. Hunter treats of glass in general, early glass-making in America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and devotes three chapters to the sources of information about Stiegel Glass, its materials and methods, its characteristics and specimens, while in a voluminous Appendix he brings together many important records and documents.

